



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

19 March 2013

S. Josephine Cooper, Chair
606 Douglas Hwy
Lamoine, ME 04605

Dear Ms. Cooper:

I have received your letter expressing concern over my biennial budget proposal. As I recently said in my State of the State address, this budget was not something I enjoyed putting forward.


The problem is there are only three large budget areas – education, welfare, and revenue sharing. The attached chart shows this quite clearly. We cannot cut \$200 million from debt service – the State must pay its bills. The Judicial Branch costs \$100 million – courts are already behind, and I will not cut them further. Other core state functions – State Police, Corrections, our Natural Resource agencies – have been cut to the bone to feed continued growth in education and welfare spending and they cannot be cut further without reducing public safety or our future economy. That leaves only the three large pots of money, and I chose revenue sharing.

If towns need flexibility from the State to reduce their own budgets, we are happy to help. If there are proposals to reduce administration and overhead by sharing services between towns, we will support them. However, if every municipality wants to keep everything – public works, assessors, managers, police, schools, fire, and other services – to themselves, then the voters of that municipality can make that decision. But those local decisions have price tags and we can no longer hide from that reality.

Most letters I receive say we made the wrong choice and that we should restore the \$200 million subsidy to municipalities, but they do not suggest other cuts that should be made at the state level. It is easy to find fault and hard to find solutions. I welcome any suggestions town officials have to cut elsewhere in the state budget, but it is time for everyone to set complaints aside and offer solutions.

If you have serious ideas for consideration, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,


Paul R. LePage
Governor

cc: Senator Brian Langley
Representative Richard Malaby



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FY 14 - 15
Total General Fund Appropriations
\$6,299.4
Dollars in Millions

